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IRING OF THE FATHERS, OR SEEKING WISDOM FROM THE PAST.

DISCOURSES

PREACHED IN THE

NEW NORTH CHURCH,

ON LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 9TH,

ON THE COMPLETION OF THE

124TH YEAR FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

AND OF THE

25TH YEAR SINCE THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PRESENT PASTOR.

BY FRANCIS PARKMAN, D. D.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE HEARERS.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY SAMUEL N. DICKINSON,

52 Washington Street.

1839.

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SERMON I.

DEUTERONOMY 32. 7.

REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD, CONSIDER THE YEARS OF MANY GENERATIONS. ASK THY FATHER AND HE WILL SHOW THEE : THY ELDERS AND THEY WILL TELL THEE.

The rapid succession of those periods, by which we are accustomed to measure human life and the course of human affairs, suggests very useful instruction, and may produce the most salutary impressions. It is the part of a sound philosophy to seek wisdom from the past, that it may obtain guidance for the future. It belongs to a filial piety to acknowledge and adore a fatherly protection through the scenes and changes of our being, and specially does it become a christian's gratitude, to hold in reverence the institutions of his religion, which are to the world a standing monument of his faith ; which preserve for him, in its purity and beauty, that pearl of great price, the gospel of his hopes ; by which his knowledge is enlarged, and the life of God within him is nourished.

For the same purpose were the chosen people commanded to keep in remembrance the providence and grace of God. And when the voices of the elders had ceased, and the lips that might have instructed were closed in death, they were to consult the annals of their history, and gather up the lessons there recorded of

experience and wisdom. ‘Enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to a search of the fathers. For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.’

To such enquiries, and to the reflections they suggest, we are invited by the period at which we, my friends of this religious society, are this day arrived.

With our last communion sabbath, were completed one hundred and twenty-four years since the establishment of this ancient church, or the first celebration within it of the christian ordinances. And with the past week, are closed just twenty-five years since the ordination of its present pastor. The concurrence of these two periods, embracing the past and the present history of this religious society, invite our recollections of the way, in which the Lord our God has led us and our Fathers through this succession of years, and should awaken our grateful acknowledgements for the protection with which we have been favored. Such acknowledgements become every child of God, as he remembers the goodness which has followed him all his days. Especially do they become a religious community, when with the return of stated periods, they survey the blessings which have been transmitted to them, through successive generations, and in the possession of which they are still permitted to rejoice. Let me ask you, then, my christian friends, with this day to consider the days of old, and to unite with them our thankful acknowledgements of present blessings.

This religious society was gathered in 1714. Its origin was not in division and uncharitableness, but in reverence for religious institutions, and a desire

to meet the wants of an increasing population. Its separation from the parent church—the Old North—was, therefore, in a spirit of perfect harmony, in the same co-operation and mutual kindness, which to so large an extent, and through successive periods, have distinguished the churches of this city. Into the details of its history, however, during the first century, it is not my design, as it is unnecessary for me to enter. These are exhibited, with his characteristic fidelity and discrimination, by my excellent predecessor, the late Dr. Eliot, in his discourse preached at the dedication of this church, in 1804.* And I may also refer you for some biographical notices of my predecessors, to another discourse, published at your request, in 1814; and which, if it be still in the hands of any among you, would render my repetition, at the present time, alike needless and unbecoming.

I am not, however, unmindful, that with the lapse even of fewer years than have gone by since the completion of a century in this church, events once familiar and fresh in remembrance, may, with the things of old, have gone quite out of mind; or, that within that period, a new generation has arisen, by whom they may never have been known. Allow me, then, for the sake of my younger hearers, to whom I trust such a recapitulation may not be altogether uninteresting or unprofitable, to exhibit with brevity the way in which the Lord our God has led us.

The first pastor of this church, was the Rev. John Webb, by whom, soon after its organization, the sacrament of the Lord's supper was for the first time admin-

* Note A.

istered, in November, 1714; and with whom, in 1720, agreeably to the usage of the churches at that period, dividing the ministerial labors between pastor and teacher, was associated the Rev. Peter Thacher, previously settled in Weymouth. This step, notwithstanding the acknowledged worth and distinguished gifts of the individual, was the occasion of a schism, which issued in the foundation of another religious society, now our sister church, and was a rare and melancholy, I am sorry to add, disgraceful exception to the harmony, by which, as has been said, the religious communities of Boston have been generally distinguished. The causes and effects of this dissension, I have no inclination to discuss. It is enough to say, that it appears to have originated with a minority of the society, in some conscientious scruples, which in these latter days have ceased, as to the propriety or even lawfulness of inviting a minister to one church, who was already the pastor of another. It was unconnected with the personal or professional character of Mr. Thacher, except, indeed, as it implies a high estimate of both; and, after his death, in 1738, amidst the general respect, the Rev. Andrew Eliot was, in 1742, associated with Mr. Webb, as his second colleague, and upon the decease of the latter, in 1750, became the sole pastor of the church. In this relation Dr. Eliot remained, amidst the conflicts of the revolution, and the various fortunes of the flock, till his death in 1778. With this event, was closed a ministry of thirty-six years, which for its ability, fidelity, and acceptance, is still remembered by many of the aged, of various denominations, in this city with respectful recollections, and the praise of which is in all

the churches of New England.* Like his predecessor and colleague, Mr. Webb, to whom I would gladly pay my passing tribute as to one of the most conscientious and faithful servants of Christ Jesus—he loved his profession, and consecrated to it the full energy of his vigorous understanding, and of his upright heart ; declining a high academical distinction, that was once and again presented to his choice, and preferring to spend and be spent in the service of his people. Happy the people, and happy too the city, that rejoiced in his light. His devotion to his calling, and to his church, commanded at once their respect and gratitude. It was the source to him of much of his personal happiness ; he deliberately regarded it as the security of his professional usefulness ; and let it not be counted presumption, if I venture to commend his example and his opinions in this regard, to his brethren and successors of the present day, as the most effectual method of preserving, amidst these changing times, the permanent influence of the ministry.

With the death of Dr. Andrew Eliot, was occasioned the first vacancy that had occurred in the ministry of this church, during a period of sixty-four years, it being one of the advantages of a collegiate charge, that the survivor succeeded to the whole duty, and the people were not left destitute. Nor was this interval of long duration. With a degree of unanimity somewhat remarkable in a community recognising no merit by descent, and naturally jealous of any form of hereditary succession, civil or ecclesiastical, Rev. John Eliot was, within a few months, invited to supply his place. The confidence cherished for the father, you thus early trans-

* Note B.

ferred to the son. His personal graces and virtues left you no reason afterwards to regret your choice. His ministry of nearly thirty-four years, was one of exemplary faithfulness on his part, of warm attachment and harmony on yours.

I should fail of discharging, on this occasion, what I owe to the memory of my predecessor, if from mere unwillingness to repeat what I may in some other form have expressed, I should wholly omit a notice of some of his distinguishing traits.

Dr. Eliot was of the few whom all men loved. And this is the rather to be mentioned, because he united the gentleness that attracted affection, with a remarkable honesty and simplicity of utterance. To a degree beyond most men, characterised as was he by the amiable and kind, did he use plainness of speech. His judgment of character, always considerate, was also discriminating. He was not of those, who through a false candor or fear of displeasure confound moral distinctions. He was accustomed to call persons as well as things, by their proper names. Yet such confidence was there in the kindness and child-like simplicity of his heart, that his was the rare felicity of making the plainest seem also the kindest utterance. I have never heard of an instance in which he gave offence: or if for a moment it seemed to be given, it was as quickly obliterated in the certainty that the design was friendly, and, what was specially to the purpose, that the judgment was true.

Of this sound discrimination of character, he has given examples in that valuable work, the 'Biographical Dictionary,' the most important of his publications, in

which he has sketched with a masterly hand, the characters of various individuals, particularly of some whose public course, political or ecclesiastical, divided the opinions of thier cotemporaries. From the accuracy of his delineations, and the impartiality of his judgments, it were seldom safe to appeal.*

For Dr. Eliot has been claimed, by one who cherished for him an enthusiastic fondness, distinguished praise ‘as a good scholar and a ripe one.’ And by another of his warm admirers, he has been designated as the ‘Jortin of America.’ He was a reader of the Roman classics to his death. In accurate and discriminating acquaintance with the history and biography of his own country, he had few his equals, and perhaps no superior.

But he never permitted his love of letters, or devotion to favorite pursuits of any kind, to divert him from the faithful discharge of professional duty. He was a diligent writer of sermons; and though as a preacher, not distinguished, as was his father, for popular or commanding gifts, and from the native delicacy and modesty of his mind, shrinking instinctively from every art of exhibition or display, which none were quicker to discern, and none could with a sweeter grace ridicule in others—yet to the serious and judicious he could have been no otherwise than acceptable. As a pastor, he was excelled by none, eminently devoted to the flock, being unto them always as a father and a brother. Notwithstanding his habits of study, and the number of his literary as well as professional avocations—for which he usually redeemed his mornings—he was often

* Note C.

found with the families and at the firesides of his people. In truth, he gave more of his time to pastoral intercourse, than was then customary with his brethren, or which would be possible—I am not sure it would be expedient—to a young clergyman, who had not attained to his experience, or had not with equal fidelity improved his years of preparation for the labors of his pulpit. I remember it as among those anxieties incident to every thoughtful young man, entering upon an untried field of duty, that I was to be successor of one who maintained so constant and so welcome an intercourse within the dwellings of his society. If I have followed him, my christian friends, with unequal steps, I may yet venture to say, that I have ‘done what I could.’ If I have failed in the performance, I have not been wanting in the purpose: for, being present with you, or absent, I have remembered the commandment, once given of old to the tribe of Levi, that the names of the people should be in their heart, and that they should bear them before the Lord continually.

Dr. Eliot retained to his death, the manners and costume of the old school, which, but in a few cherished exceptions, have now quite disappeared. They were in unison with the natural politeness of his heart, and with that sentiment of respect, which it was one of the salutary influences of his early education to inspire, for whatever was good and venerable, and which, in turn, he conciliated for himself. In simplicity and sincerity, he had his conversation in the world. He has long since been joined with them who see God, the pure and the just made perfect. But his image, my elder hearers, is still familiar to your recollections, and his memory, I know, is embalmed in your hearts.

Thus you perceive, from this brief survey, that for the space of almost a century, viz. ninety-eight years, this church was favored with the ministry of four successive or collegiate, pastors, interrupted only by the short interval of thirteen months, between the death of the elder and the ordination of the younger Eliot. And he having died in February, 1813, and the settlement of the present pastor having taken place at the close of the same year, leaves a period to this church of one hundred and twenty-four years, with less than two years of vacancy. When now we consider the inconveniencies to which a religious society is subjected, by a frequent interruption of the pastoral care, and by the changes, which of late years, have become common in our churches, this circumstance may not be deemed unworthy of our grateful notice, in considering the way through which the Lord our God hath led us.

II. Let us now turn to the period which has since elapsed, and which, commencing with December 1813, completes a quarter of a century, since my entrance on this ministry.

Did the occasion permit—or rather did not a certain decorum forbid—any mingling of what to the stranger must seem, the private interests of a single church with the wider interests of nations, I might remind you, that the last twenty-five years constitute of themselves a period of unusual interest in the political as well as moral world ; in which, beyond most others of equal duration, signal changes have been witnessed ; events of no ordinary moment have occurred, affecting the condition and the prospects of mankind. What revolutions has it witnessed in the governments of the world !—

Within it, nations have risen and fallen, and the powers of the earth have been shaken. Crowned heads have been brought low. Monarchs in long succession, the young, and they of hoary age, have been lain together in their graves—their sceptres and their kingdoms transferred to other hands. If we look only to the nation from which we sprung—the eldest monarch of Europe, and of the whole British line, extending through a term of almost one thousand years—George III.—and with him three of his sons, the heirs, or successive occupants of his throne, have exchanged their palaces for the tomb, while others of his royal house, in the bloom of youth, as they were just attaining the summit of earthly glory, ‘permitted to see every thing, but to grasp nothing,’ have closed their eyes in death. Of those, too, who by their genius, their wisdom, or their eloquence, or by their preëminent rank, setting them on the very pinnacle of human society, then controlled the destinies of England—scarcely an individual remains. They are, and their high places of honor and power know them gone, no more.

In our own country also, the last twenty-five years have been fruitful of change. Within them we have known war and peace, and vicissitudes of other sorts, which I need not in this place declare. We shall not easily forget—though it must be counted only among the incidents of such a calamity as war—how the silence and solemnity of our sabbaths were once and again disturbed, in the melancholy summer of 1814, by the passage of troops through our generally peaceful city; nor the spectacle of the then venerable pastor of yonder sister

church,* going with his spade among the multitude of his fellow-citizens, to aid in the erection of fortifications on yonder island, to protect the city from the enemy. Neither can we forget the grateful exultation with which was welcomed the return of peace, for it was a day made joyful by the thanksgivings of many unto God.

Other events there are, interesting and important, which might not improperly be exhibited here, but which would open far too wide a field for our present reflection. We may glance only at those of an exclusively moral or religious influence. And here it may be safely asserted, that the last twenty-five years have been fruitful beyond all former precedent, in enterprises of piety and benevolence. A vast machinery, curiously formed and wonderfully complicated, has been set in motion for the physical, social, moral, and spiritual improvement of the world. If to these twenty-five years we add the thirteen that preceded them, embracing thus all that belong to the nineteenth century, they will include the beginnings of almost all those associations, religious and philanthropic, which at the present moment are in most active operation. I do not mean that before this passing century, such associations were not known. On the contrary, both within our own country and Great Britain many admirable institutions did exist, the fruit of christian charity, which for wisdom in the design, for fidelity and usefulness in their administration, have not since been surpassed. Many of these, however, have been merged in the wider and all-embracing schemes, by which associations at the present day are characterised. Countless are the insti-

* Rev. Dr. John Lathrop, then in his 75th year.

tutions which, from the formation in 1804, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and of kindred societies soon after in our own country, have been established. Their name is Legion. Time would fail me to utter what has been purposed and accomplished, in the name and for the sake of Freedom, Temperance, Peace ; in the great cause of Education, for the suppression of vice, for the abolition of Slavery, for the conversion of the Heathen, for relief of the maladies and supply of the wants both of body and soul. On many of these institutions, the blessed fruit, I repeat, of that gospel, which teaches that we are alike the children of a common Father, and speaks peace in Christ Jesus, God has been pleased to command the manifest tokens of his favor. Let our souls praise Him for the spirit of piety and philanthropy, which under his guidance prompted them, for the good they have already accomplished, and for all the good we may hope they are still destined to accomplish. We may count it an honor, my Christian friends, if by any efforts of our own, however small, we have enjoyed the opportunity of advancing these objects, and of thus becoming fellow-workers with God, in blessing his children. Let our prayers ascend ever with our alms, and let it be our hearts' desire, that on the sacred cause of truth, and freedom, and humanity ; on our schools and our churches, specially on our Sunday Schools, and our ministries for the Poor, which are among the choicest fruits of the prevailing charity of the day, the dew of God's blessing may continually descend.

If of some other schemes of philanthropy, not to be overlooked among the teeming inventions of the day, we are constrained to admire somewhat more the zeal

than the excellent judgment, and as the best expression of our good will can only wish for them the guidance of that wisdom, which dwelleth with discretion, still will we not cease to trust, that they shall issue in good ; that by attention excited to the objects they propose, and by a just estimate of the means through which we may hope their accomplishment, He from whom all just counsels and good works proceed, will cause, that the interests of humanity and virtue may be finally advanced.

If, too, in the course of my ministrations I have not been studious to urge upon your attention these multiplying projects of the times, and may have seemed to some even deficient in a zeal, which in others glows with so bright a flame, I must ask with an apostle to be forgiven this wrong, which has come, not, I trust, from indifference, or worldly policy, or fear, but from some honest convictions, that there were objects of higher moment, beter to command our affections. True it is, I have not sought to enlist your zeal in some of the passing excitements of the day, because beyond them all, and above them all, I have counted the ministry of the gospel of Christ Jesus. And while according to my measure, amidst whatever of weakness or error, I have sought to exhibit the great things of God's law, and have reasoned of righteousness, of temperance, and a judgment to come, I have been unwilling to neglect the greater in any pursuit of the less.

It is recorded, as you know, of one of those ancient worthies, whose examples are written for our instruction, that when engaged in an important work, and invited of certain of his countrymen to attend a meeting 'in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono,' he sent

messengers unto them, saying, 'I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?' 'And though,' it is added, 'they sent unto me four times after this sort, I answered them still after the same manner.' Nehemiah vi. 2. I have counted that this example of the Jewish Governor of faithful devotion to his own work, might well be imitated by us of these later days; who though not called to the same arduous duties as were his, might show the same fidelity in our own. And if we, my christian brethren, would maintain the institutions of our holy religion in their simplicity and efficacy, let us keep them separate from the passing excitements of the day. Let us not presume to mingle the unchangeable truths of God, with the doubtful theories or devices of men. The gospel of Christ Jesus is destined to survive the changes of time. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God abideth forever.

III. I should now invite you to consider those passages in our religious history, which within this community, and particularly this society, are most interesting to us. We should thus be led to survey the course of God's providence towards us, in its blessings and chastisements, in what He hath bestowed, and in what He hath taken. But these topics, with the reflections suggested by our whole subject, must be reserved for the afternoon.

Now may the Lord God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He incline us to His way, and so nourish us by His grace, that we may grow into an holy temple unto the Lord, builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit.

SERMON II.

I SAMUEL, 7. 12.

‘ HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US.’

‘ When ye are come to the brink of the waters of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan,’ was the command of the leader of Israel to the chosen people, when they were about to witness a signal deliverance. And it was upon another manifestation of the same guardian care, that Samuel, the venerable prophet of Israel, assembled the people, and took a stone and set it up for a pillar, and said, ‘ Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.’

In this spirit of grateful recollection, and devout acknowledgment, not certainly of a miraculous, yet of a most gracious and adorable Providence, would we remember the ways of God in our sanctuary. We have glanced at the days of our fathers. Let us come nearer to our own. Let us survey as proposed in the third place, the history of our religious community, and particularly of this christian society, during the twenty-five years which have now passed, since it was my happiness to be connected with it.

At the time of my ordination, in 1813,* and for a few years preceding, the condition of the churches in this city, then town of Boston, differed in many important particulars, from that of the present day. In

* Note D.

number, as might easily be anticipated from a regularly advancing population, they are greatly increased. To the twenty-three then existing, there have been added twenty-eight, of all denominations, besides the chapels sustained by churches of various names, for the ministry of the poor, and two other churches, specially set apart for the worship and religious instruction of seamen.

Of our congregational churches united with the Boston Association, there were ten,* with all the ministers of which, there existed a friendly ministerial intercourse, the interchange, that is, of professional services in each other's pulpits, by which their personal friendships, and the fellowship of the churches, were happily maintained. This continued, with little exception or interruption, till the memorable Trinitarian controversy between the Rev. Drs. Channing and Worcester, in 1815. By the previous establishment, however, of the Theological Institution at Andover, in 1808, and the erection of the church in Park street, in 1809, for the express purpose of upholding the orthodox faith; to which must be added, in this connexion, the results of the election of the Hollis Professor of Divinity, at a still earlier period—1804—an influence had been set in operation, which, combined with that of a well known religious journal zealously enlisted in the cause, issued in the adoption of what has been significantly termed, the 'Exclusive system.' On which side it was commenced, or at whose pleasure pursued, I detain you not to declare. Be this as it may, the official exchanges, which to some considerable extent had been maintained

* This includes the nine old congregational churches united in the Quarterly Charity Lecture, and the King's Chapel.

by all the ministers of the ancient congregational churches, and had included the pastors of the two elder Baptist churches, whose voices have been heard by some of you, my hearers, in this assembly,* were then confined to brethren of like faith. Thus, while the number of churches and of pastors was enlarged, the range of ministerial intercourse was narrowed. Yet, even after this period, councils for ordinations were occasionally composed of representatives from churches of differing doctrinal views, though of the same congregational denomination. Nor was it till after the settlement of the Rev. Mr. Wisner, as pastor of the Old South Church, in 1820, that such unions, having a show of christian harmony but wanting the spirit, utterly ceased.

In truth, it must be admitted, that attractive as may be the theory of an universal fellowship, there are difficulties and embarrassments in the practice, against which no human wisdom or charity may effectually guard. Whatever, therefore, of good might seem to have been lost to a mere official intercourse, was gained to decorum and good will, by the avoiding of occasions of offence, and the effectual exclusion from the same pulpits, of a discordant theology. On the other hand, we believe, and we rejoice in the belief, that with advancing knowledge, and changes, not few or small, that have gradually been introduced to soften and make acceptable to the people, the sterner features of a once repulsive and terrific faith ; and especially from associ-

* Rev. Drs. Stillman and Baldwin ; to the former of whom, Dr. Andrew Eliot gave the Right Hand of Fellowship, at his installation in 1765, and with whom both he and his son occasionally exchanged. All the services of this installation, with the exception of the sermon, were by congregational clergymen.

ations of christians of various names in common objects of philanthropy, in the cause of education, peace, temperance, and kindred interests, many good influences have followed, and a wider charity, the natural fruit of hearty coöperation, has been diffused.

But, dismissing all topics of doubtful disputation, which commend us not to God, neither are profitable to men, I take great pleasure in remarking, that of the churches and of the ministers with which we, christian brethren, are united, it has been the distinguished felicity to maintain uninterrupted harmony. We may not presume to apply to our spiritual state the beautiful description given by the evangelist of the primitive disciples, after the first persecution by the Roman emperors had ceased.* But it is the expression only of our reasonable gratitude to say, that through a long succession of years we have enjoyed peace, absolute and without exception. The divisions so common in the day of our fathers, among christians professing the same faith, and the yet more shameful divisions between members, and even colleague pastors, of the same church, the history of which is a standing blot upon their records—(let us wipe it off as we can from their memories)—have not, thanks to the God of peace, descended to us. We know them only as the things that are passed away. But, while we rejoice in the peace that has blest our churches, uniting the pastors and the flocks, each to one another, and, may it be, all to God, let us take heed, beloved, that it be not the peace that

* ‘Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.’—[Acts 9. 31.]

cometh with indifference, or with that worldliness of mind, which being engrossed with the things earthly, has no care for the things heavenly ; which, not less than uncharitableness, ensnares the soul, and is distinctly declared to be enmity with God.

Amidst, however, these needful cautions, suggested by a just sense of our dangers, and not to be forgotten even amidst congratulations, I cannot but rejoice with you, christian brethren and friends, in the harmony which unites, and with the solitary exception to which I alluded this morning, belonging to the earliest period of its history, more than a century ago, has ever united this society. I bless God, that the unanimity in which this fair temple was erected, in the day of my honored predecessor, which happily distinguished this congregation through the whole of his ministry, and was among the chosen satisfactions of his life, have not been interrupted in mine. Let it be our hearty prayer and our faithful endeavor, that it may be preserved ; that we may always know, as did our fathers, and that our children after us may know, as do we, how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. But may it be our care, also, and our hearts' desire, to add to our unity the 'beauty of holiness,' the grace of an evangelic virtue. 'I suppose,' said one of our venerable fathers, in his sermon at the dedication of yonder sister church, nearly one hundred and twenty years ago,* 'I suppose there is not a more beautiful church in all the land, built for the worship of God,

* See Dr. Cotton Mather's sermon at the dedication of the new brick (now second) church, 1720.

than this. But what will it signify if it have not the beauty of holiness.'

But I must come more immediately to our own days. And here, I am persuaded, you will not count it a departure from the decorum which should usually restrain the indulgence of personal feeling, if on this occasion, when adverting to our history for the last twenty-five years, I should have somewhat to say of myself. The history of any church is, or should be, identical with that of its ministers, and a mention of either includes some mention of both. That ministry must be poor indeed, and its end, if not fully come, ought to be nigh at hand, that admits of being separated from the annals of its church.

I entered, my brethren, into this relation, when as yet in the freshness of youth, and in sincerity, as I trust, of purpose, mingled with whatever of infirmity, to devote myself to its service. It becomes me gratefully to adore that divine goodness, that has preserved me to this day, and permitted me, amidst the ravages of sickness and death, which at one period threatened to desolate the churches,* to stand in my lot, and to fulfil according to my measure, its various duties. It becomes me the more to acknowledge this care and patience of my heavenly father, when I consider that of my brethren of all denominations, who were in the ministry here in 1813, only four remain ;† that, with the

* From the time of the death of Rev. Dr. Eckley, and of Mr. Emerson, in 1811, to that of Mr. Huntingdon, in 1819, there was an unusual measure of sickness and mortality among the clergy in Boston. Besides those who were removed by death, others were detained from their ministry by protracted sickness.

† Rev. Drs. Channing, Lowell, Sharp, and Rev. Mr. Dean.

exception only of this, every other congregational church of the city has received a new minister, (though, happily, in two of them the senior pastors remain,) most of them more than one; two of them three, and two others four successive pastors; that within the same period, there have been no less than thirty ordinations, nineteen removals or resignations among those who yet live; and that eight have died.

It must be observed, that I here include only those churches that were in existence in 1813. Twenty-eight others, of various denominations, and embracing a larger or smaller number of worshippers, have been established since that period, to meet the wants of an increasing population, and the corresponding diversities of religious faith. Of these churches of recent origin, ten are congregational, the pastors of four of which, are united with the Boston association: and within six of these ten churches, there have already been several removals.

I am not willing to enter into professional statistics, that have little value in themselves, or terminate in the bare statement of insulated facts, leading to no useful results. Yet there are some which, in a connexion like this, may simply be stated, were it only to gratify a momentary curiosity in those who love details, and possibly some natural fondness for what belongs to one's favorite pursuits. Let me, therefore, just say, that in more than two thousand eight hundred stated services of the sabbath, or of our established seasons of worship, I have supplied my place, in person or by exchange, present or absent, almost without exception; and on no

more than four or five sabbaths, have I been detained by sickness from the house of God.

Within this quarter of a century, I find that there are on the records of the church, 625 baptisms, of which a few were of children and adults not belonging to this society;* that one hundred and two have made a profession in order to baptism; and one hundred and seventy-six have been added to the church in full communion; making the total number of those who have been baptized, during the whole period of this society of one hundred and twenty-four years, seven thousand six hundred and sixty-seven; of those professing the baptismal covenant, eight hundred and sixty-eight; and of those who have joined themselves to the church in the partaking of the Lord's supper, one thousand three hundred and eighty-nine.

I have spoken of the harmony which has happily united our congregational body. As an evidence of this, we have been invited by sister churches, near and remote, to numerous ecclesiastical councils, (eighty-one in number,) not, as was too often in the days of our fathers, for the settlement of disputes, for the rebuke of heresy, or the infliction of discipline upon the schismatic or refractory; but for the peaceful induction of ministers, called for the most part, by the unanimous voice of an affectionate and waiting people. Such invitations we have cordially accepted, and they have been to us occasions not of strife and debate, but of

* In this number of baptisms, are included between eighty and ninety of the Boston Asylum for Indigent Boys, now united to the Farm School, on Thompson's Island. For many years, the pupils, with their governess, attended worship in the New North Church, and were consequently under the pastoral care of the minister.

christian fellowship, and, we will hope, spiritual benediction.

Let me here advert for a moment, to our stated, or occasional charities. It is the duty of every religious society, as it is of the private christian, to unite its alms with prayers. And it may be numbered among the good influences of our social worship, and of the union within the same temple of all classes and conditions of men, the rich and the poor, the prosperous and the sorrowful, that the spirit of benevolence so naturally mingles with the spirit of piety ; and that while we are seeking blessings for ourselves, we are taught not to be unmindful of our suffering brethren. In this church, as might be inferred from its numbers, and its location, there have never been wanting worthy objects for our charity ; neither has there been wanting the ability or readiness to relieve them. Agreeably to the returns furnished me by the deacons of the church, there have been collected, partly in the offerings of the communion table, partly at our contributions previous to the annual Thanksgiving, a sum exceeding six thousand dollars, which at stated intervals, and with a due regard to the differing claims and conditions of families or individuals, has been distributed to our deserving poor ; of whom are the widow and the fatherless, not a few, also, who have seen brighter days, but who, ‘ waxen poor ’ with infirmities and declining age, come to need the bounty which they were once glad to bestow. I can bear grateful testimony to the worth and excellence of this evangelic charity. The altar consecrates the gift. It blesses him that gives, for it is sanctified by prayer ; and it blesses him that receives, for it is administered with

a considerate sympathy, and in supplying the wants of the saints, is abundant also in thanksgivings unto God. I know of few forms of charity more useful or unexceptionable than this.

In addition to these monthly or annual collections for our own poor, we have had, as is customary in other societies, many contributions, or private subscriptions, for various purposes, for the support of our Sunday school ; for the ministry at large within the city ; for the American Unitarian Association, and the Massachusetts Evangelical Missionary Society, (an excellent institution, which I commend again to your liberality ;) for the relief of towns or of districts, that had suffered by fire ; and, lastly, in aid of destitute churches in less favored portions of the land. The amount thus collected cannot with precision be ascertained, and undoubtedly contributions have been made, which are quite forgotten. But from minutes procured from the records of the society, and from some notices of my own, I may state, that more than five thousand dollars have thus been gathered, making a total sum of at least eleven thousand dollars, consecrated to charity.

I present these details, not certainly as any token of extraordinary liberality ; nor as exceeding, perhaps, in any given instance, what, in common with all other religious communities, it was very meet and right, yea, our bounden duty to offer, but as exhibiting in the amount a gratifying proof, among others that might be given, of the solid results of a quiet, unostentatious, but faithfully continued charity : of the indirect advantages, moreover, which flow from these our christian institutions, regarded as a medium of christian benevolence.

For we see, brethren, how the offerings cast from month to month, and from year to year, into the treasury of the temple, though they may be in some as the widow's mite, and burdensome to none, shall in a short term of years swell to a goodly offering, acceptable to God, and fruitful of service to men.

Of the few events or incidents, which the books of the church, or personal recollection supplies, I shall only state, that in 1819, the public reading of the baptismal, or, as it was strangely termed of old, the 'half way covenant,' which had before been administered in the presence of the whole congregation, was by an unanimous vote of the church dispensed with; 'it being deemed sufficient that the parents acknowledge it in private.'

I shall here take the freedom of transcribing a few sentences from the records of the church.

December 11, 1827. 'The brethren met by request of the pastor, and the meeting having been opened with prayer, he proposed, for the acceptance of the church, on the admission of members, a covenant, which was adopted by the Old North Church, in the time of Mr. Mayo, their first pastor, and afterwards in use during the ministry of the Mathers:—a covenant, recommending itself by its brevity, simplicity, and entire freedom from points of doubtful disputation, and which may be regarded, also, as a monument of the wisdom and moderation, no less than of the faith and piety of that ancient church from which we were derived. It was also stated, that upon these grounds it had recently been adopted by our sister church.* Whereupon, it was

* The Second church; for a full and interesting account of which, see the century discourse of Rev. Professor H. Ware, jr., its then pastor.

unanimously voted, ‘ that the same covenant be adopted, and henceforth used at the reception of members of this church.’ ’

The following is the form of this unexceptionable document. As its brevity permits, I am sure its simplicity will easily excuse its insertion.

‘ You do in this solemn presence, give up yourself to the true God in Christ Jesus, and you promise to walk before God and this church of His, in his holy ordinances, and to yield your obedience to every truth of His which has been, or *shall be* made known to you, as your duty; the Lord assisting you by his spirit and grace.

‘ We, then, the Church of Christ in this place, do welcome you to our fellowship, and we promise to walk towards you as a member of the same body with ourselves, endeavoring your spiritual edification in Christ Jesus.’

Such, brethren, is a specimen of the covenants adopted by our earliest predecessors, the Pilgrim Fathers of New England. They did not seek, as have some that came after them, to hold dominion over faith, by prescribing articles of human device. They did not presume to debar from the blessed ordinances of the gospel, any for whom Christ died. The covenants of the first churches were characterised, as has been well remarked,* ‘ by the spirit of christian benignity and toleration;’ and it may be added, also, by the soundest wisdom and the highest philosophy.

Into further details, though to some they might be not without a certain interest, I shall not enter.

* See a discourse on the Principles of the Reformation, preached at the dedication of the First Congregational Church in Salem, by its pastor, Rev. Charles W. Upham : in the appendix to which, the reader may find, also, the first covenant of that ancient church, drawn up by Francis Higginson.

In truth, the history of a peaceful religious society furnishes scanty materials for narration. Like the course of a well-ordered family, it is to be traced chiefly in the quiet enjoyment of its privileges, in the returns of its consecrated seasons, and in a regular, though unobtrusive progress in knowledge and godliness. It is in times of division, and of excited zeal, amidst anger and uncharitableness, that the historian, sacred or profane, gathers his amplest harvest. Accordingly, we find that the early records of some of our churches, abound with materials of this sort. Whether it was that religion occupied more the hearts of the people than it now does, or, which is nearer the truth, was more identified with their civil and political relations, whether that a stricter cognizance was taken of individual character, and of every thing supposed to affect the cause of Christ, certain it is, that lamentably frequent were the inflictions of discipline, and bitter the controversies in which they were sometimes engaged.*—He that shall survey their ecclesiastical annals, and observe how often the weak or the fallen were called to judgment; how often the brethren aggrieved appealed to sister churches for redress from the brethren offending; how one council was opposed to another council, and censures and monitions, suspensions and excommunications, were reciprocally interchanged, will be com-

* The divisions in the First Church in Salem, during the ministry of Rev. Mr. Fisk, which continued for many years, and in 1735, drew upon her the censures, and finally, the withdrawing from her communion of this and other churches, may be cited as an instance.

But for further examples of these melancholy divisions, see the highly interesting and instructive discourse, delivered by the venerable Dr Bancroft, of Worcester, January 31st, 1836, on the completion of fifty years of his ministry.

pelled to acknowledge, that our fathers realized but imperfectly, the communion of the saints; that whatever may have been their reverence for God, they had not learnt from their Master, compassion for the ignorant, and them out of the way. If we, their children, have lost somewhat of that zeal for God, which was thus jealous for his ordinances, we have learnt, perhaps, something of the charity, which endureth, because it hopeth all things. And amidst a due sense of unworthiness and the humility becoming us, we shall not be solicitous to enquire why the former days were better than these, for the experience of Solomon conspires with our own, to teach us, that we may not enquire wisely concerning this.

Of the subjects pertaining to my own ministry, I have, thus far, spoken chiefly of the living. But to God belong the issues of death as well as life, and there is another record, my friends, which I must present, and which I never survey without emotion. It exhibits the names of 659, who, within the last twenty-five years, have been gathered to the congregation of the dead.* Of this whole number, whose funeral rites I have attended, 481 belonged to this society, making an annual average among us, of between nineteen and twenty deaths. The proportion of infants, or children under ten years of age, is nearly one third, and of those exceeding sixty, nearly one quarter part.

* Of these 659, 216 were under ten years of age.

154 had attained to or exceeded sixty.

And of these latter, 55 were between 60 and 70

42	70 and 80
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46	80 and 90
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11	90 and 100
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Now, my brethren, what a record is here ! What a multitude does it show to us, who have gone the way whence they shall not return. We have not been visited during this period, if we except only a few short weeks, by contagious disease. The pestilence has not walked among us. Death has made no unusual demands upon our numbers. We have even enjoyed in some years, as in the present,* a signal exemption from the grave. We find, moreover, a very large proportion among us of those who have attained to old age, even beyond the measure of the general estimates of human life, or which the registers of mortality in some of our most favorably situated and healthful villages might justify us to expect. And still, I repeat, how many from among us have passed away ! Truly, the grave is a land without order. The small and the great are there ; the hoary head and the infant of a day ; and they both lie down together. Our fathers, where are they ? I miss from their places the venerable forms—such, at least, they seemed to me—that at my settlement graced this temple ; of whom some were the strength and ornament of our ancient society, who brought forth fruit in old age, and are now, we doubt not, before the throne of God, serving Him in His temple. Others I recal, whose honorable age did not stand in length of days ; but being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled a long time, and their souls pleasing God, he hastened to take them away. Younger heads of

* To the time of the delivery of this discourse, of the sixteen deaths recorded of those whose funerals I had attended since the beginning of the year, *four* only belonged to the society. In the following week, however, two others were added to our dead.

families, fathers and mothers, children dearer than life, the trusted brother and the confiding sister, promising young men and active citizens, have alike passed away.

There is something inexpressibly affecting—were it not for the blessed hope and the glorious prospects of the gospel of Christ Jesus, we should be ready to say awfully mysterious—in these promiscuous ravages of death. It has borne from us not the useless only, and the worthless, but ‘the excellent of the earth,’ on whom families and friends and even a community reposed; the upright and the honorable, the stay and the staff, with lovely infancy and blooming childhood. The simple mention of annals like these—what remembrances does it not awaken, of ties dissolved, of friends departed, of treasures hidden in the grave. Let us rather say, as was said by the angel, of the body of the Lord Jesus; they are not here. Let us hope, that we may find them hereafter, with the treasure lain up for us in heaven.

Through what varied scenes does it please God to call his children to pass! Here, congratulation for gifts bestowed; there, bereavement and offered solace. ‘Here, a course commenced with the fairest auspices; there, eclipse and disastrous twilight; here, prayers, and hopes for long life, health, and happiness; there, condolence, lamentation, and tears over a lifeless body.’*

* See Mr. Buckminster’s discourse at the interment of the Rev. William Emerson, May 12th, 1811, on the day immediately succeeding the ordination of the late Rev. Samuel C. Thacher, over the New South Church, in Boston. ‘The services of this joyful occasion,’ says Mr. Buckminster, in a note to this sermon, ‘were so tempered by the idea of the unburied remains of our departed brother Emerson, as to render this interesting solemnity unusually serious and affecting.’ Nor can we here omit the reflection, equally serious and touching, that nearly within the space of a year, Mr. Buckminster himself was joined

How often have the waters of baptism on the brow of infancy been mingled with the chill dews of death; and within a few short weeks the voices of the bridegroom, and of them that make melody, have been hushed in the silence of the tomb. God grant that time, which dries up but too quickly the fountains of grief, may not leave it unsanctified; that so many tears, though wiped away, may not have been wept in vain. God of his mercy save us from perverting his judgments; and from that sorrow of the world, that worketh death.

And now, my christian brethren and friends, as we have considered together the Providence of God, let us enquire what are the instructions it presents. Let us open our hearts to the lessons of wisdom; to the monitions and encouragements which such a survey affords us.

I. In the first place, let us adore together the faithfulness of God, as it has been manifested in the past, and as it establishes our assurance of hope for the future. We have seen one generation passing and another generation coming; but thou, O God, art the same, and thy years cannot fail. How sustaining is the thought,

to the friend he was thus honoring, in a yet earlier grave; and that the ministry of Mr. Thacher, also, commenced amidst circumstances so affecting, having once and again been interrupted by long absence and protracted sickness, was closed by his death in a foreign land, before he was permitted to complete its seventh year. It was within this period, that the unusual mortality among the clergy of Boston and its vicinity, to which reference has been made in another part of this discourse, took place. Rev. J. L. Abbot, successor to Mr. Emerson in the First Church, died in 1814, after a ministry of only a few months; Rev. Mr. Cary, of the King's Chapel, in 1815; Dr. Lathrop, of the Second Church, in 1816; Mr. Prentiss, of Charlestown, in 1817; Mr. Thacher, in France, in 1818; Professor McKean, of Harvard University, who, by his frequent occasional services, was intimately connected with the Boston churches, died also abroad the same year; and Mr. Huntingdon, of the Old South Church, in 1819.

that amidst all change, there sitteth on the throne the immutable and everlasting One, beholding all, disposing all, and by means ever at his control, making all things work for good.

Let the conviction of this great truth be our strength and our joy, in the relation which unites us as a religious society. We remember with affection the friends that are gone. Let us be grateful that so many remain ; and that in the faithfulness of God is our sure hope for the time to come. It is by his law, that one generation passeth away. It is equally his law, that another generation cometh. Yes ! brethren, we will bless God, that the ravages of death do not prevail to desolate our churches ; that the gospel lives, though its believers die. The generations of God's servants continue, and their seed shall be established forever.

II. It is a fit subject for our congratulation, that amidst the many that have gone, and changes which not death alone and the vicissitudes of life, but multiplying churches and multiplying sects have made, this ancient society still remains in so good measures of prosperity and peace. Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. But it becomes us to remember both how we have ministered and how we have received.

For myself, while I repeat my hearty thanks to Almighty God for preserving care and continued opportunities of service, I would inwardly feel, rather than publicly lament, the infirmities and defects to which I cannot be insensible, and for which His mercy is my only hope. But I surely may express the sense I cherish of the

kindnesses you have bestowed, and especially of the candor with which you have always interpreted my efforts to serve you. Would to God that they had been more effectual. For amidst the harmony that unites us, and which I joyfully accept as a token for good, much remains for monition and improvement. I regret—in all pastoral fidelity I must regret—that so many among us, exemplary as I believe in other relations, and whose friendship I number with my privileges, still fail to observe the ordinances of God; forsaking for no urgent occasion, (as the manner of multitudes in this city is) the afternoon worship, and leaving us sadly alone in the celebration of a Saviour's love. I lament, that of so many parents among us, the offspring are left unbaptized. It is with me a subject for humiliation and distrust, that few are persuaded to these duties, when I would gladly persuade all. Let me entreat you, beloved, that the poorness of my ability be not taken as your apology for the neglect of the duty. Let me beseech you, fathers and mothers, to bring your children hither to the waters of baptism, and yourselves to the table of the Lord. Let me exhort you that are young, to know the God of your Fathers, and Christ Jesus whom he has sent; to remember him as he commands, and to consecrate to him the first fruits of your lives.

Is it asked how we shall best maintain, in their purity and efficacy, the institutions of religion, and be faithful to the inheritance we have received from our fathers? The answer is, simply by observing them. By separating them, absolutely and forever, from all the vain theories, refinements, and excitements of the hour, and

by cherishing them in the spirit of a filial reverence, of a faith that works by love.

And now, brethren, we may say with an apostle, having obtained help of God, we are here together this day. How long we may thus continue, is known only to Him with whom is the residue of our years. What events await us, of joy or grief, of life or death, we may not even conjecture. Of this only are we certain, that when a few years have come, we shall every one of us be called ‘to give an account of himself to God.’ But our hearts’ desire is, that when these places that know us shall know us no more, there may still be found here a generation to serve Him. May venerable piety still grace this temple, and the freshness of youth be here consecrated to God. May the hearts of the parents here be turned to the children, and the hearts of the children to the parents, and thus in the faith and virtue of generations yet to come, may that gracious word, according to which we hope, be fulfilled, ‘As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord :— my spirit that is upon thee, and the words that I have put into thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.’

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. (p. 5.)

The New North Church was dedicated in May, 1804. An occasion of this kind, though now of frequent occurrence, was then an unusual event in Boston and its vicinity. Indeed, the erection of a new church was numbered among the weighty, if not hazardous enterprises of the day. With the exception of the wooden church in Hollis street, afterwards removed to make way for the present more durable edifice, no new congregational church had been undertaken since the Brattle street, in 1773. So that at the consecration of the New North, Dr. Lathrop, then among the oldest ministers of the town, and familiar, it may well be believed, with the various duties of his calling, being invited to assist his friend, Dr. Eliot, in the dedication, remarked to one of his own parishioners, that it was a service so new to him, that he hardly knew how to set about it, 'though,' added he, 'having Solomon's Prayer for the Temple, we are not left without a model.'

NOTE B. (p. 7.)

Dr. Andrew Eliot has justly been numbered with the most eminent divines of New England. Through the whole of his ministry, his congregation was one of the most numerous and respectable in Massachusetts, to whom, as has been observed, he was most faithfully and affectionately devoted. At the same time, he took a deep interest in the literary, philanthropic, and civil concerns of the times. To Harvard College his services were of great importance. He was a member of its corporation for nearly fourteen years, 'and after the death of President Holyoke, in 1769, he was urged to take his place. The attachment he bore to his people,

caused him to decline the election. After the resignation of President Locke, who succeeded Holyoke, he was actually chosen into the office, though contrary to his urgent request.' From that period, however, to his death, including most of the presidency of Dr. Langdon, his influence on the affairs of the college was sought and highly valued. [See 'Historical Notices of the New North Religious Society.']

His volume of sermons, twenty in number, which he dedicated with a pastoral affection to the people of his charge, and which is highly valued to this day by the aged among us who knew him, is very creditable to his talents, and well sustains the reputation he has ever enjoyed, as an able, faithful, and in the highest sense of the term, a catholic divine. Like many of the clergy of his day, he was called a 'moderate Calvinist'; but it will be difficult for the impartial reader to detect the doctrines of the Genevan School in any of his publications. All his discourses were eminently practical; his illustrations of doctrine were rational and judicious; and his warm heart and hand of fellowship were open to all that loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth.

In common with his brethren of that day, he evinced a deep concern in the progress of the American revolution; never introducing politics, except the broad politics of christianity, into his pulpit, but always mindful of his rights and responsibilities as a citizen.

After the death of Dr. Mayhew, in 1766, he maintained a regular correspondence with Thomas Hollis, Esq. of London, that ardent friend of America, as he was of civil and religious liberty; from whom he received many valuable presents in books, and was the medium, also, of some of his liberal benefactions to Harvard College.

With Arch-deacon Blackburne, the author of the Confessional, and well known for his attachment to this country; with Dr. Samuel Chandler, one of the most eminent of the dissenting ministers of his time, with Dr. Harris, and others, he exchanged several letters. To Dr. Chandler, particularly, he wrote, soliciting his influence to prevent the establishment of another college in Massachusetts, as proposed by Governor Bernard, and other zealous Episcopalians.

Through the favor of his grandson, Mr. John F. Eliot, I have in my possession a manuscript volume, in which, with a few letters of a personal and domestic nature, the whole of the English correspondence is fairly copied out. Some of the letters of Mr. Hollis and Arch-deacon Blackburne are highly curious and characteristic. They show the sense these gentlemen entertained of the character of Dr. Eliot, and might furnish, did the limits of this appendix permit, copious matter for quotation or remark. Should a suitable opportunity occur, selections from this manuscript might easily be made, and, I may venture to say, would be found no uninteresting addition to the documents, official and private, illustrating the history of the revolution, which, by the indefatigable labors of Mr. Sparks, have within a few years been made public.

Of the same nature with this English correspondence of Dr. Eliot, combining the most familiar domestic or personal affairs, with subjects of great political moment, are the letters between the elder President and Mrs. Adams, with some taste of which the public were favored in a highly interesting lecture, delivered last winter, before the Historical Society, by one of his immediate descendants, Charles F. Adams, Esq.

A curious passage in one of these letters of Mr. Hollis, leaves us to infer, that being a man of retired habits, and preferring his own quiet ways to general society, he had been annoyed by the visits of Americans in London, who naturally, but perhaps obtrusively, sought the acquaintance of so ardent a friend of their country. New England clergymen, also, were accustomed to send to him their printed sermons; from which, not being always to the taste of Mr. Hollis, he begs, as was reasonable, to be excused.

Here follows his earnest request.

To Rev. Andrew Eliot, D. D.

Pall-Mall, Feb. 23d, 1767.

If you would be pleased to give out, in your own handsome way, in Boston and about, that I wish to avoid *all* private correspondence, and all private personal visitors from thence, however in certain respects honorable, you will do me a *great* favor. My wish has long been to serve mankind, every where, each under each, like Shakspeare's hounds, embodied, rather than individually: for to both ways, I am of opinion, the lot of humanity is not equal.

Pray, sir, assist me friendlily in this matter. Scarce a ship now arrives from Boston, but brings some good man to take offence at my not seeing him. * * Keep me clear, also, of *North American sermons*, unless by special men on very special occasions.'

Of Dr. Eliot's sentiments in relation to creeds and subscriptions imposed by human authority, we may easily judge from the following passage in a letter to Arch-deacon Blackburne, dated 1767.

'The fathers of New England were a set of worthy men, but they did not understand religious liberty. There was too much of an intolerant spirit among them. It was not a fault peculiar to them; it was the error of the day. But however contracted they were in their religious sentiments, *they never imposed subscriptions to any human forms*. Possibly this was because there was no suspicion of erroneous principles. But I would rather think, that their good sense taught them that it could answer no valuable end, and could lead only to prevarication and falsehood.'

NOTE C. (p. 9.)

The serious typographical errors which abound in his 'New England Biographical Dictionary,' and diminish its value, were a source of deep mortification to Dr. Eliot. They are the more to be regretted, as they were in consequence of his mistaken kindness in entrusting the printing of the work to the inexperienced and unfaithful hands of a young parishioner, whom, as just entering upon business, with his usual pastoral benevolence, he was willing to assist. Dr. E. had devoted to this work the leisure of his life. 'But,' says his brother, in the historical notices before quoted, 'he could never hear it spoken of without disgust.' Had his pecuniary circumstances permitted, he would have suppressed the edition. Yet, notwithstanding these blunders of the press, the work is of the highest authority.

Note D. (p. 17.)

The ordination of the present pastor took place on December 8th, 1813. The services of the occasion were introduced with prayer by Rev. Charles Lowell. The sermon was preached by the Rev. W. E. Channing, with whom for three years, and afterwards at the Divinity School in Edinburgh, the writer pursued his theological studies. The consecrating prayer was offered by Rev. President Kirkland, of Harvard University: the Charge by Rev. Dr. Lathrop: the Right Hand of Fellowship by Rev. Mr. Tuckerman, of Chelsea; and the concluding prayer by Rev. Mr. Hurd, of Lynn.

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